

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: April 16, 2003

Division: District 1

Bulk Item: Yes ☐ No ☐

Department: Mayor Dixie M. Spehar

AGENDA ITEM WORDING:

Proclamation to declare May 1, 2003 as "Law Day".

ITEM BACKGROUND:

Law Day, 2003 provides an opportunity to re-examine how we as a nation want our judiciary to function. At a time when partisans and special interests try to shape a judiciary that is responsive to political considerations above all else, we have the responsibility to reaffirm our commitment to a truly independent third branch.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

TOTAL COST: _____

BUDGETED: Yes ☐ No ☐

COST TO COUNTY: _____

SOURCE OF FUNDS: _____

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes ☐ No ☐ **AMOUNT PER MONTH** _____ **Year** _____

APPROVED BY: County Atty ☐ OMB/Purchasing ☐ Risk Management ☐

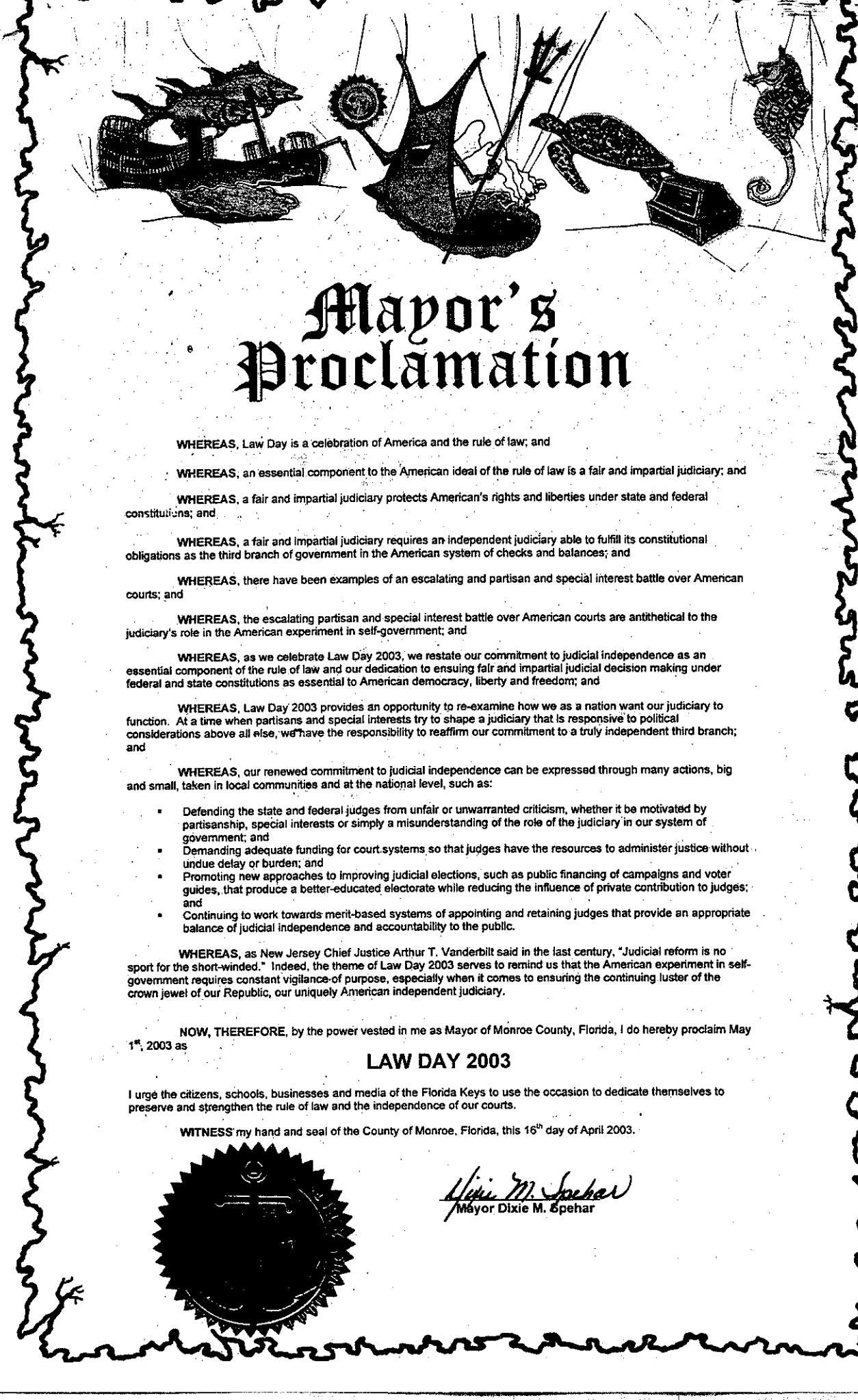
DIVISION DIRECTOR APPROVAL:

Dixie M. Spehar
Mayor Dixie M. Spehar

DOCUMENTATION: Included ☐ To Follow ☐ Not Required ☐

DISPOSITION: _____

AGENDA ITEM # B12



Mayor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, Law Day is a celebration of America and the rule of law; and

WHEREAS, an essential component to the American ideal of the rule of law is a fair and impartial judiciary; and

WHEREAS, a fair and impartial judiciary protects American's rights and liberties under state and federal constitutions; and

WHEREAS, a fair and impartial judiciary requires an independent judiciary able to fulfill its constitutional obligations as the third branch of government in the American system of checks and balances; and

WHEREAS, there have been examples of an escalating and partisan and special interest battle over American courts; and

WHEREAS, the escalating partisan and special interest battle over American courts are antithetical to the judiciary's role in the American experiment in self-government; and

WHEREAS, as we celebrate Law Day 2003, we restate our commitment to judicial independence as an essential component of the rule of law and our dedication to ensuing fair and impartial judicial decision making under federal and state constitutions as essential to American democracy, liberty and freedom; and

WHEREAS, Law Day 2003 provides an opportunity to re-examine how we as a nation want our judiciary to function. At a time when partisans and special interests try to shape a judiciary that is responsive to political considerations above all else, we have the responsibility to reaffirm our commitment to a truly independent third branch; and

WHEREAS, our renewed commitment to judicial independence can be expressed through many actions, big and small, taken in local communities and at the national level, such as:

- Defending the state and federal judges from unfair or unwarranted criticism, whether it be motivated by partisanship, special interests or simply a misunderstanding of the role of the judiciary in our system of government; and
- Demanding adequate funding for court systems so that judges have the resources to administer justice without undue delay or burden; and
- Promoting new approaches to improving judicial elections, such as public financing of campaigns and voter guides, that produce a better-educated electorate while reducing the influence of private contribution to judges; and
- Continuing to work towards merit-based systems of appointing and retaining judges that provide an appropriate balance of judicial independence and accountability to the public.

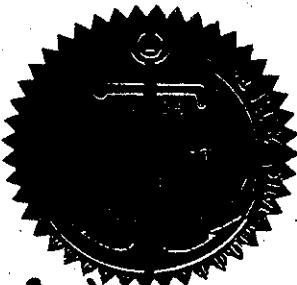
WHEREAS, as New Jersey Chief Justice Arthur T. Vanderbilt said in the last century, "Judicial reform is no sport for the short-winded." Indeed, the theme of Law Day 2003 serves to remind us that the American experiment in self-government requires constant vigilance of purpose, especially when it comes to ensuring the continuing luster of the crown jewel of our Republic, our uniquely American independent judiciary.

NOW, THEREFORE, by the power vested in me as Mayor of Monroe County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim May 1st, 2003 as

LAW DAY 2003

I urge the citizens, schools, businesses and media of the Florida Keys to use the occasion to dedicate themselves to preserve and strengthen the rule of law and the independence of our courts.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the County of Monroe, Florida, this 16th day of April 2003.



Dixie M. Spehar
Mayor Dixie M. Spehar